

REMARKS

Claims 1-29 are pending and stand variously rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nardeo (U.S. 6,530,897 B2) in view of Mercereau (U.S. 6,676,668) and/or further in view of Thompson (U.S. 5,358,478). In addition, claim 27, which is rejected as being indefinite, has been amended to obviate the rejection.

Claim 1 specifies a steerable catheter including "a rack arm including runners received by the guide track, an attachment point coupling the deflection wire to the rack arm and a linear rack engaging the pinion gear; the rack arm extending within the handle, obliquely to the longitudinal axis, from the runners to the linear rack, the attachment point being movable along a linear path that is substantially aligned with the deflection lumen." Although Nardeo shows a steerable catheter, as admitted by the Examiner, Nardeo does not disclose, among other things, a guide track and a rack arm as part of the deflection mechanism.

Mercereau is relied on for allegedly showing a similar steerable "device" that produces deflection of an elongated catheter body and uses a rack and pinion mechanism. The characterization of Mercereau is clearly incorrect. Mercereau specifically identifies that the device is merely a retrieval device having an articulating "basket." (See Abstract.) Although Mercereau shows a rack and pinion arrangement to extend and retract a wire basket from within a sheath, nowhere is there any disclosure of a deflection of even the sheath. Absent from Mercereau is structure meeting the claim limitation of "a deflection mechanism for selectively inducing a bend in the catheter body."

In view of the absence in Mercereau of a deflection mechanism, Mercereau is clearly irrelevant to Nardeo and, as such, is not combinable with Nardeo. Moreover, the combination of Nardeo and Mercereau is deficient in teaching or suggesting the claimed structure as a whole, including, among other things, each of the limitations of the deflection mechanism relating to a guide

track in substantial alignment with the handle longitudinal axis, runners received by the guide track, and a rack arm extending obliquely to the handle longitudinal axis between a linear rack and the runners received by the guide track. None of the additionally cited references overcomes any of these deficiencies. For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully assert that the claimed structure, as a whole, is distinguishable over the combination of prior art advanced in the Office Action. The rejections of claims 1-29 should be withdrawn.

Applicants believe that the remarks presented herein are fully responsive to the Office Action and are sufficient to overcome the rejections presented in the Office Action. Applicants respectfully submit that the presently presented claims are in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of the instant rejections and issuance of a Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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